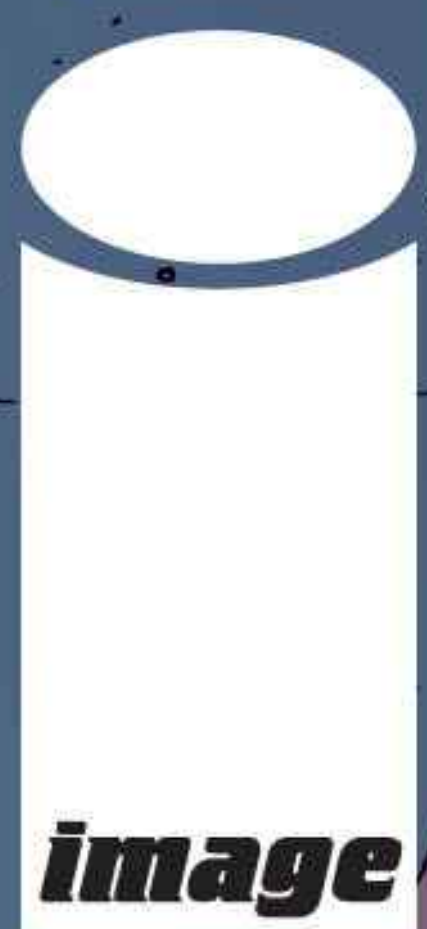


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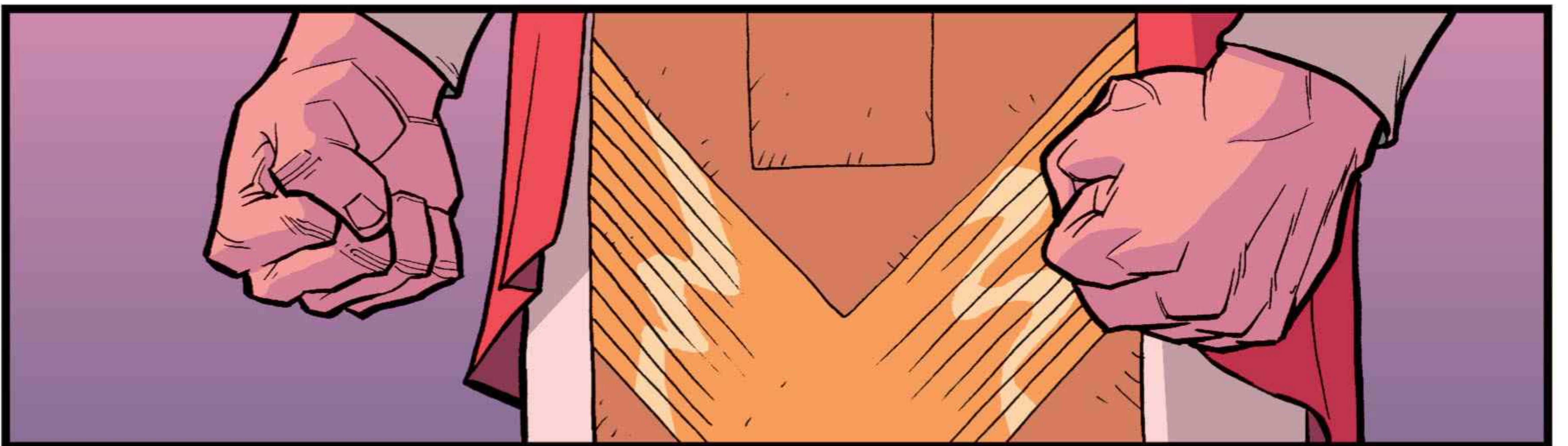
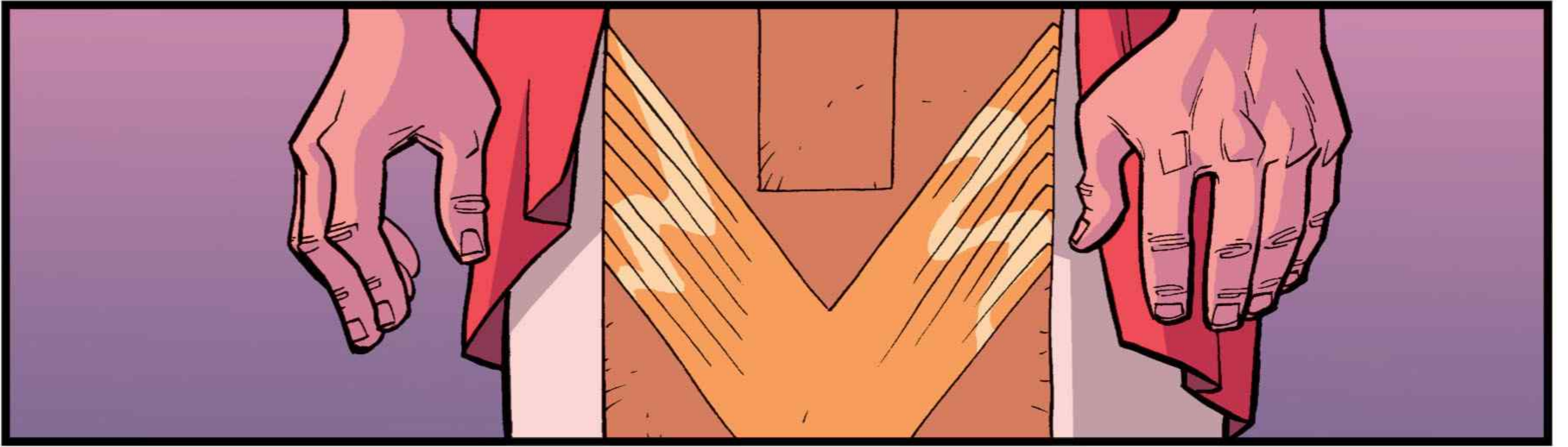
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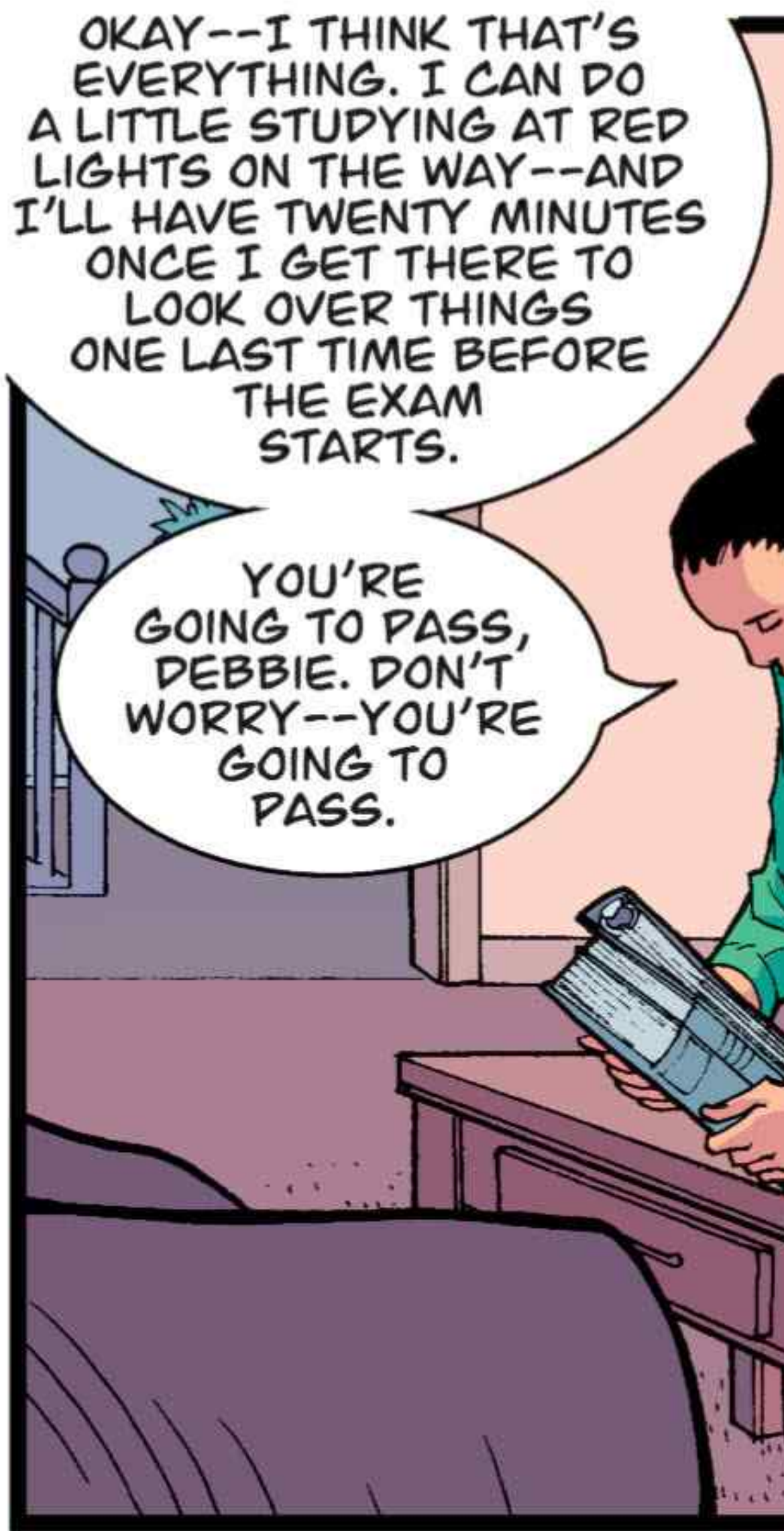
DAD?











OKAY--I THINK THAT'S EVERYTHING. I CAN DO A LITTLE STUDYING AT RED LIGHTS ON THE WAY--AND I'LL HAVE TWENTY MINUTES ONCE I GET THERE TO LOOK OVER THINGS ONE LAST TIME BEFORE THE EXAM STARTS.

YOU'RE GOING TO PASS, DEBBIE. DON'T WORRY--YOU'RE GOING TO PASS.



GREETINGS FROM THE US GOVERNMENT.



MISTER STEPDMAN! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO TELEPORT DIRECTLY INTO THE HOUSE?

YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE SOMEONE A HEART ATTACK.



MISS GRAYSON. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME CECIL? BESIDES, IF I START TELEPORTING INTO THE FRONT LAWN, HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOUR SON'S SECRET IDENTITY WILL LAST?



I WOULD STILL PREFER YOU USED THE BACK YARD OR GARAGE OR SOMETHING.

WHAT IS IT YOU'RE HERE FOR? MARK IS STILL IN SPACE, ISN'T HE?



SO YOU DID GET MY MESSAGE. I'VE BEEN VERY BUSY THIS PAST WEEK AND I JUST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE FOR NOT CONTACTING YOU IN PERSON BEFORE.

AND TO APOLOGIZE FOR ALLOWING MARK TO VENTURE OUT INTO THE UNKNOWN LIKE HE HAS. I TRIED TO STOP HIM, I ASSURE YOU.



THE MAN WHO DELIVERED THE MESSAGE, DONALD--I THINK, WAS VERY KIND.

AND AS FAR AS MARK GOING OUT INTO SPACE, HE THINKS IT'S THE RIGHT THING AND SO HE'S DOING THE RIGHT THING. I'M PROUD OF HIM. WORRIED, BUT PROUD.



NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO IN SUCH A HURRY?



I'VE GOT THE FINAL EXAM FOR MY REAL ESTATE CLASS TODAY. I THOUGHT YOU GOVERNMENT TYPES KNEW EVERYTHING.

REAL ESTATE--AREN'T WE PAYING YOU ENOUGH?

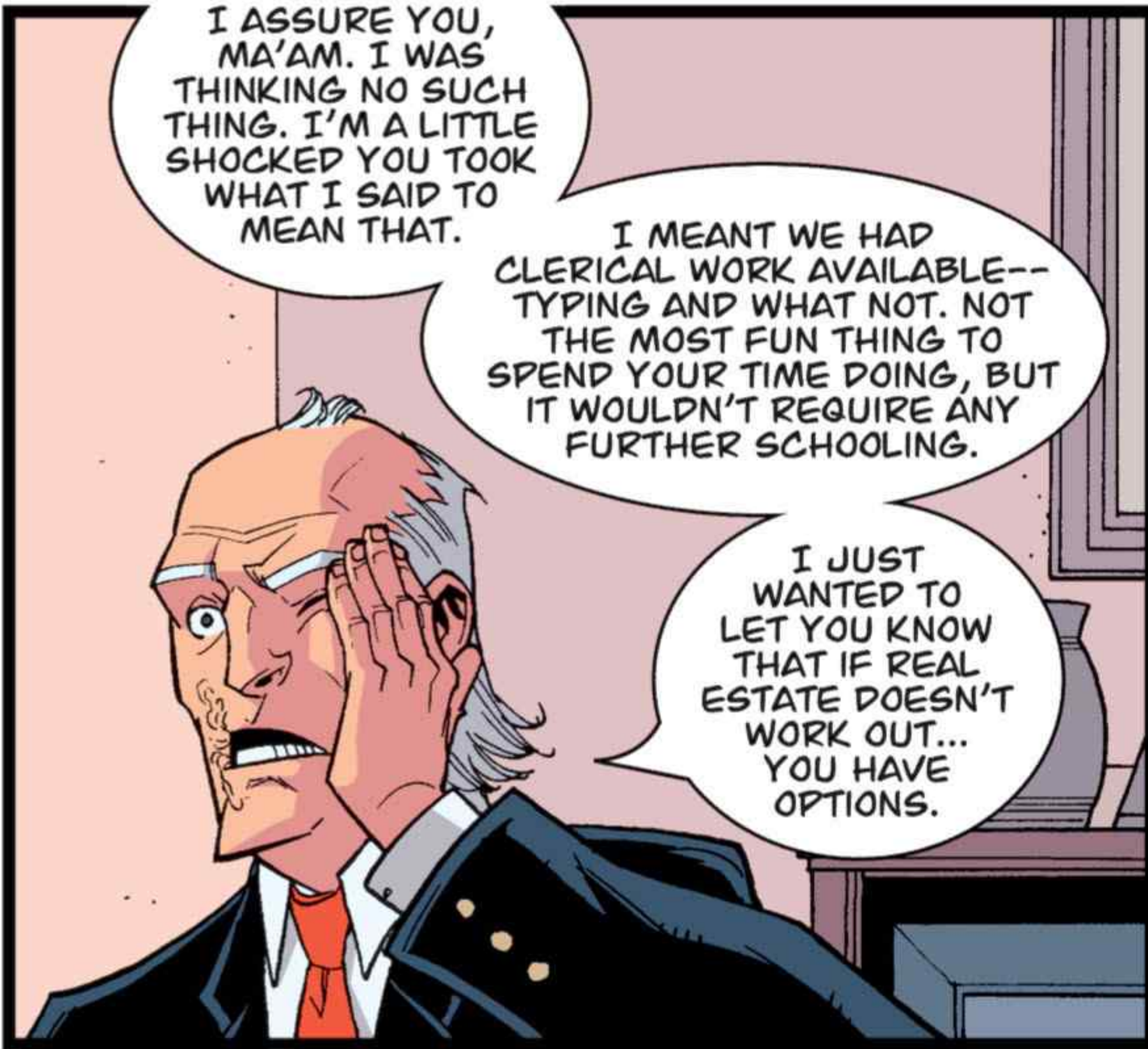


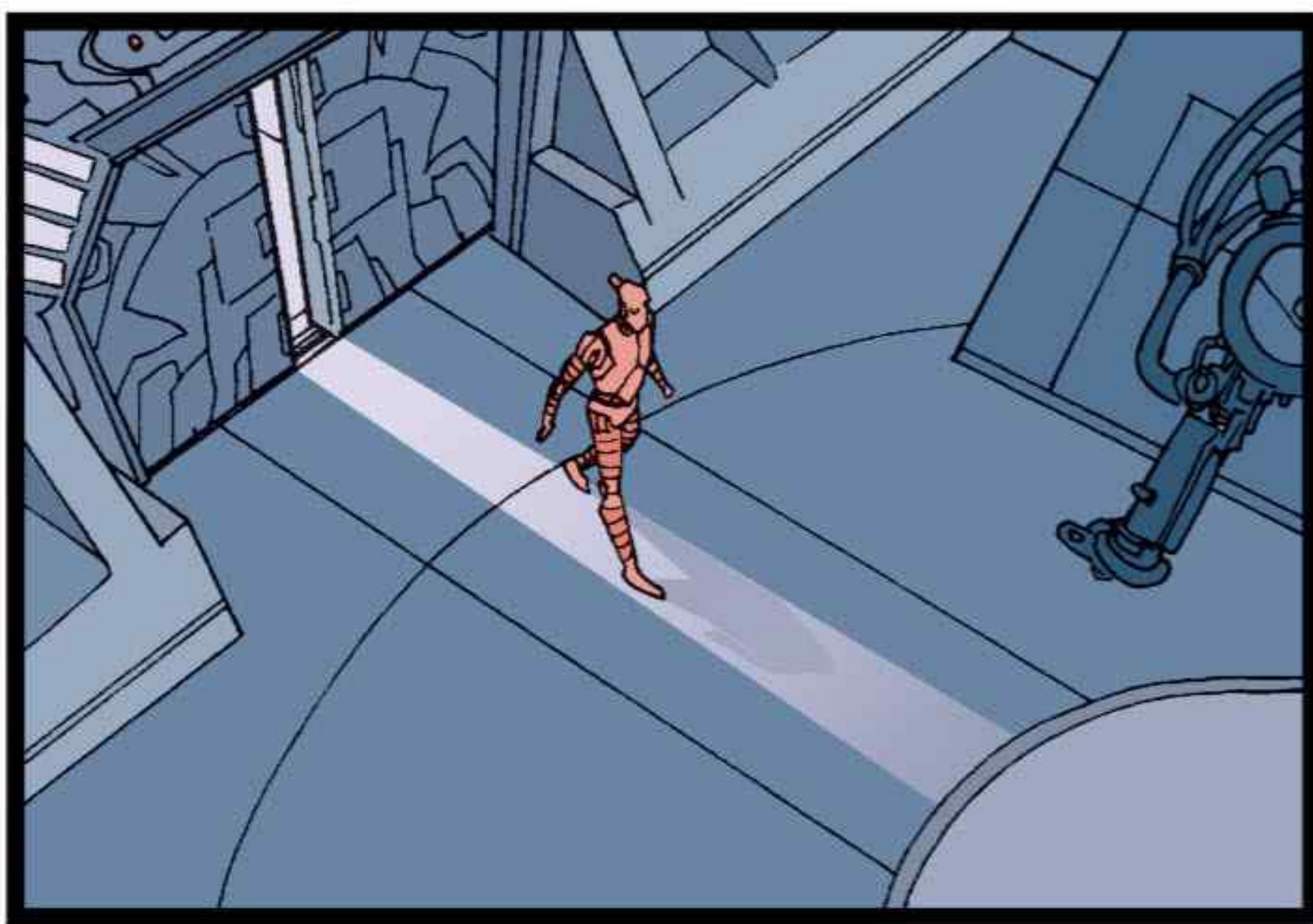
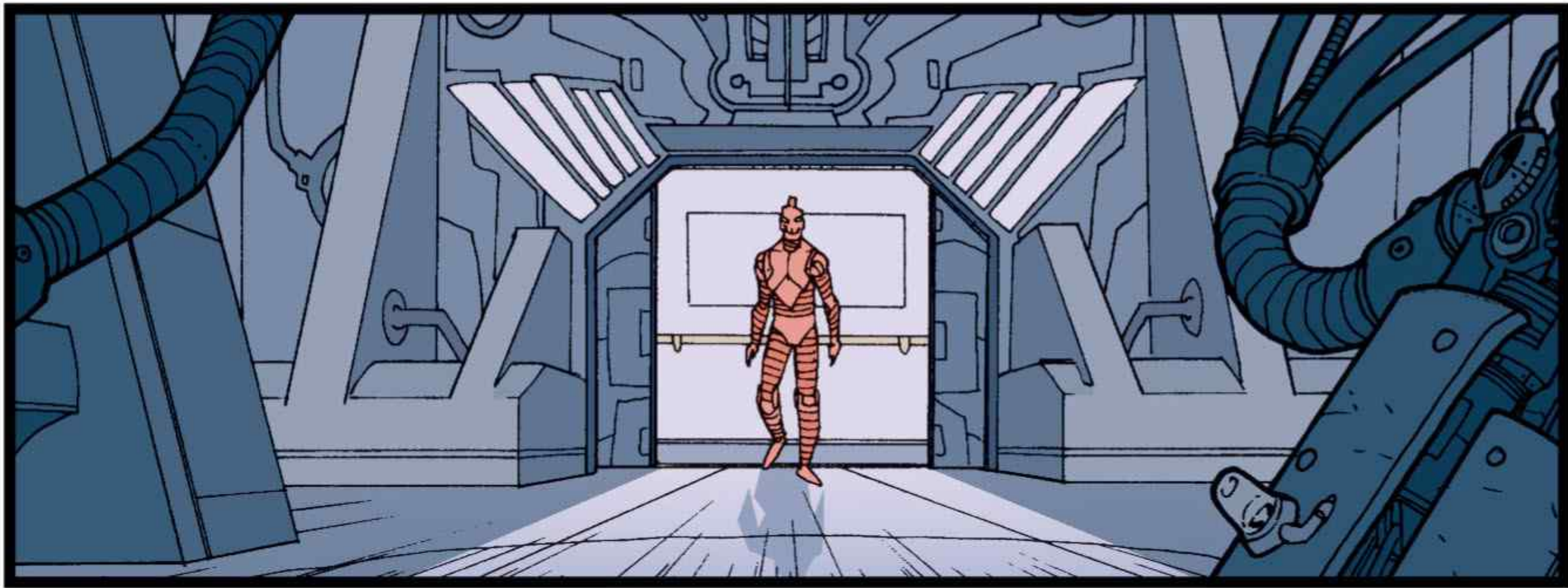
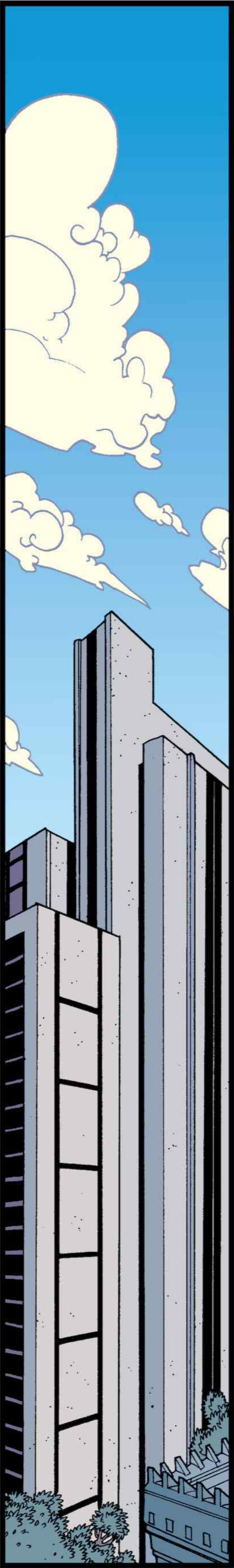
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL. I JUST NEED SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY TIME. SOMETHING TO KEEP ME BUSY.

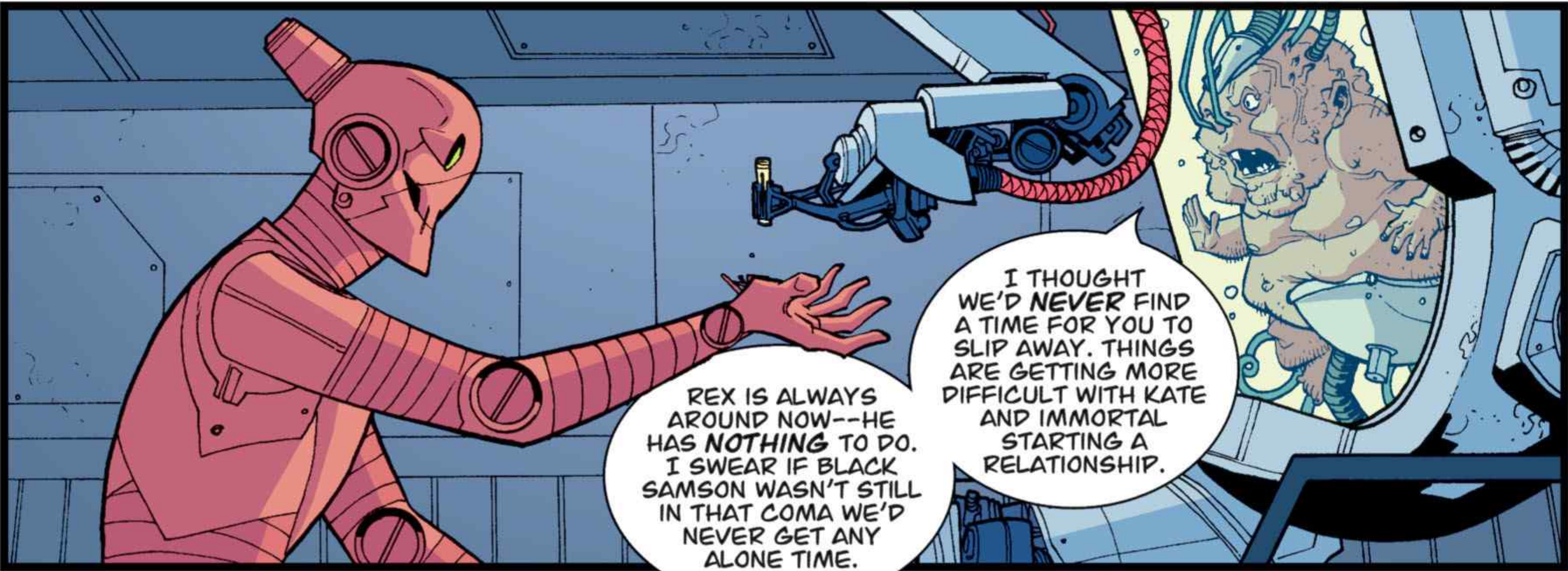


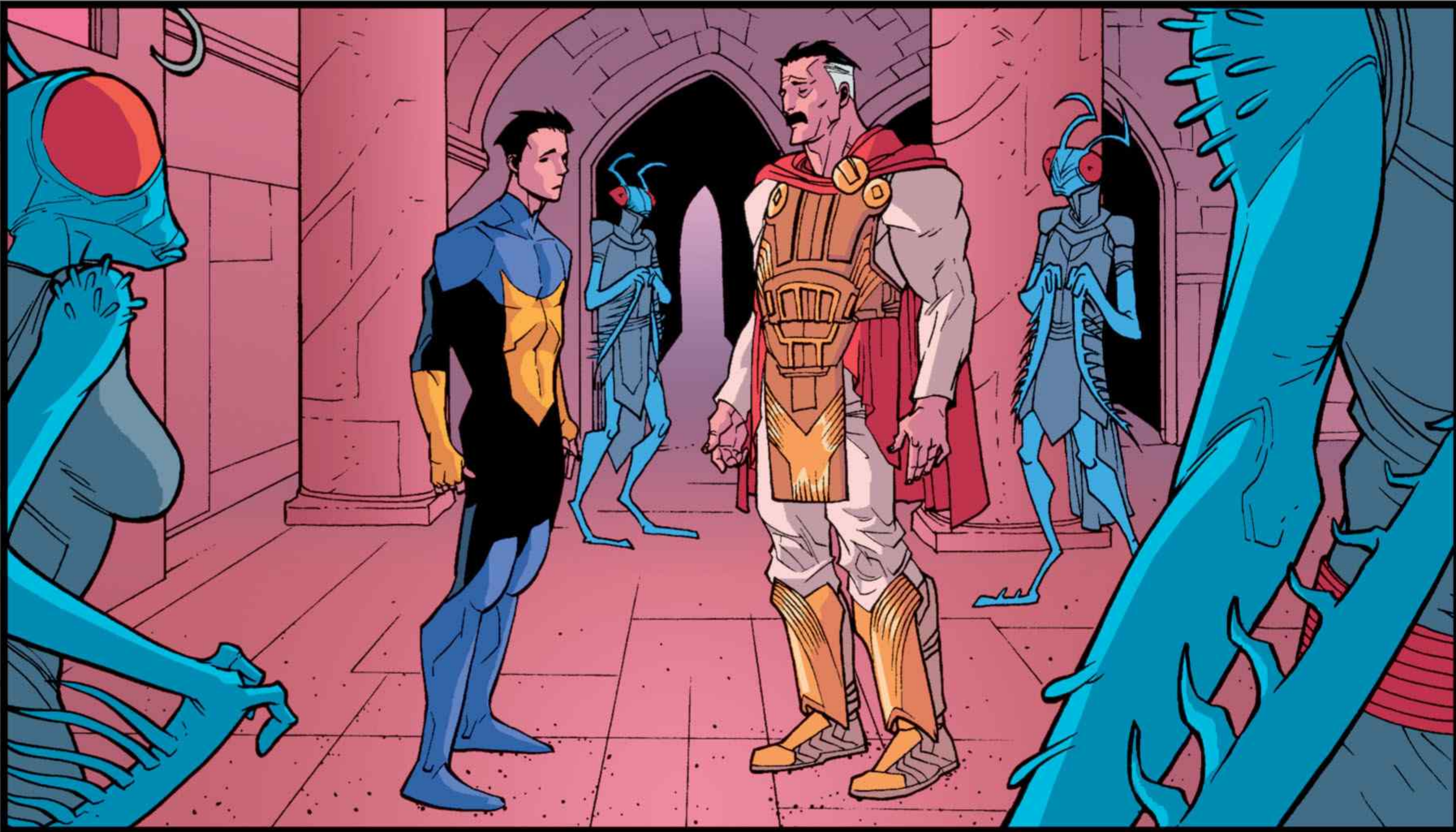
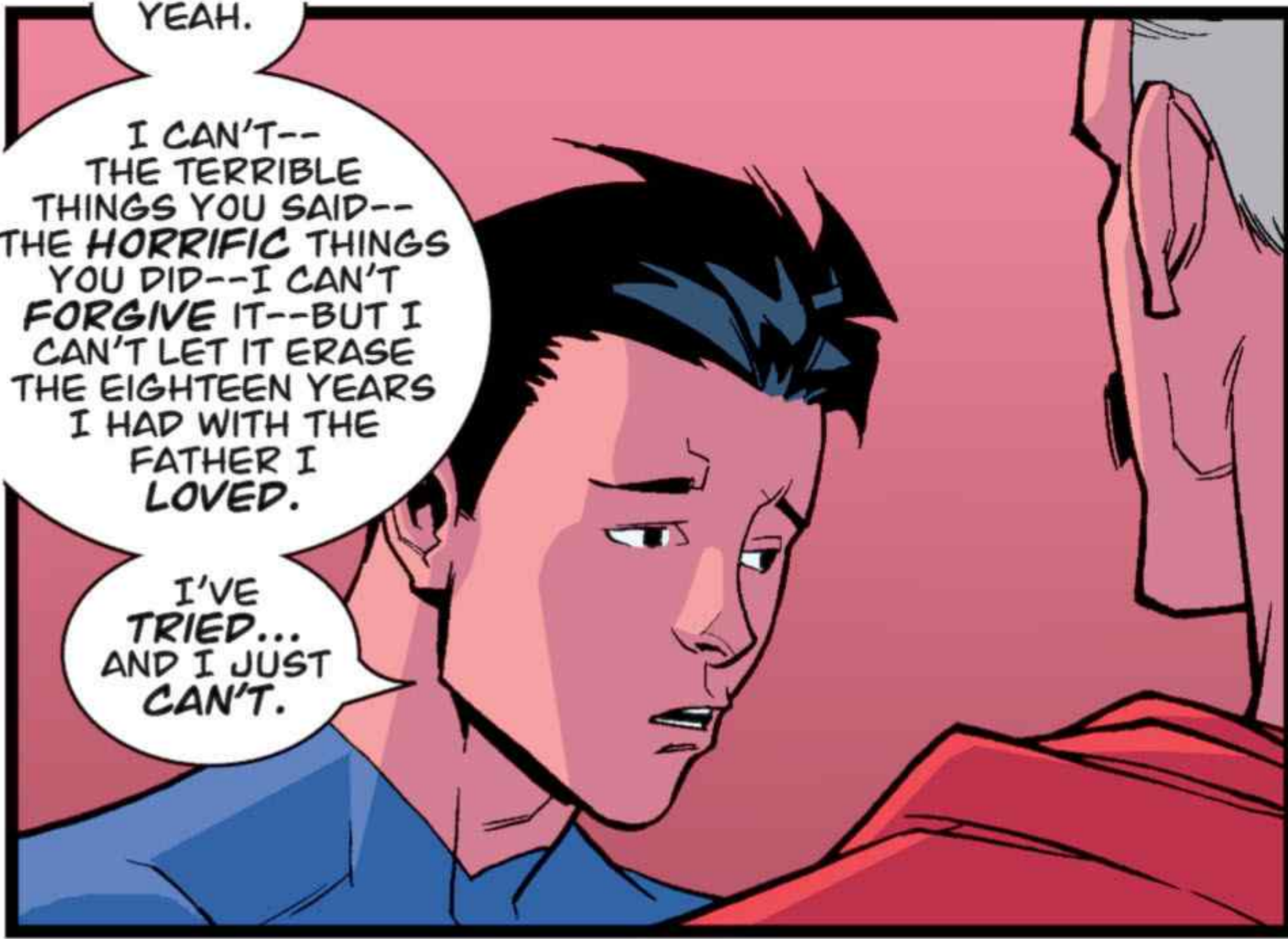
WHY, MISS GRAYSON--IF YOU WANTED TO DO SOMETHING TO EARN THAT MONEY--ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS SAY SO.











I LIVED AS A VILTRUMITE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE I CAME TO EARTH--BUT WHAT LITTLE TIME I SPENT THERE--CHANGED ME.

I WAS READY TO KILL YOU WHEN YOU DEFIED ME. I WOULD HAVE. THOSE ARE THE WAYS OF THE VILTRUMITE.

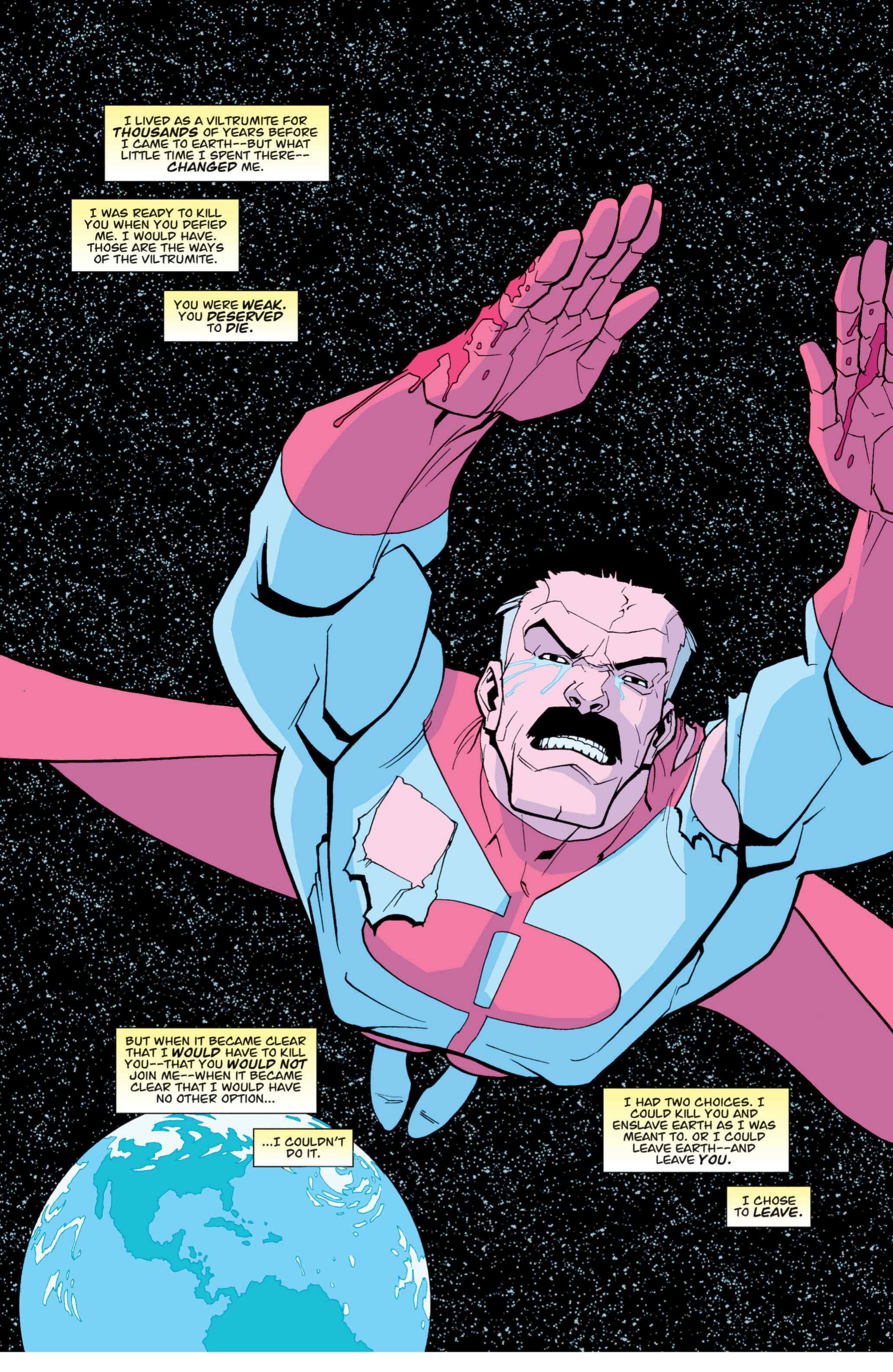
YOU WERE WEAK. YOU DESERVED TO DIE.

BUT WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT I WOULD HAVE TO KILL YOU--THAT YOU WOULD NOT JOIN ME--WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT I WOULD HAVE NO OTHER OPTION...

...I COULDN'T DO IT.

I HAD TWO CHOICES. I COULD KILL YOU AND ENSLAVE EARTH AS I WAS MEANT TO. OR I COULD LEAVE EARTH--AND LEAVE YOU.

I CHOSE TO LEAVE.





IT WAS NOT A DECISION MADE LIGHTLY. I DECIDED TO TURN MY BACK ON MY VILTRUMITE HERITAGE.

MY OFFENSE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO GREATER HAD I LISTENED TO YOU AND CEASED OUR FIGHT INSTANTLY.



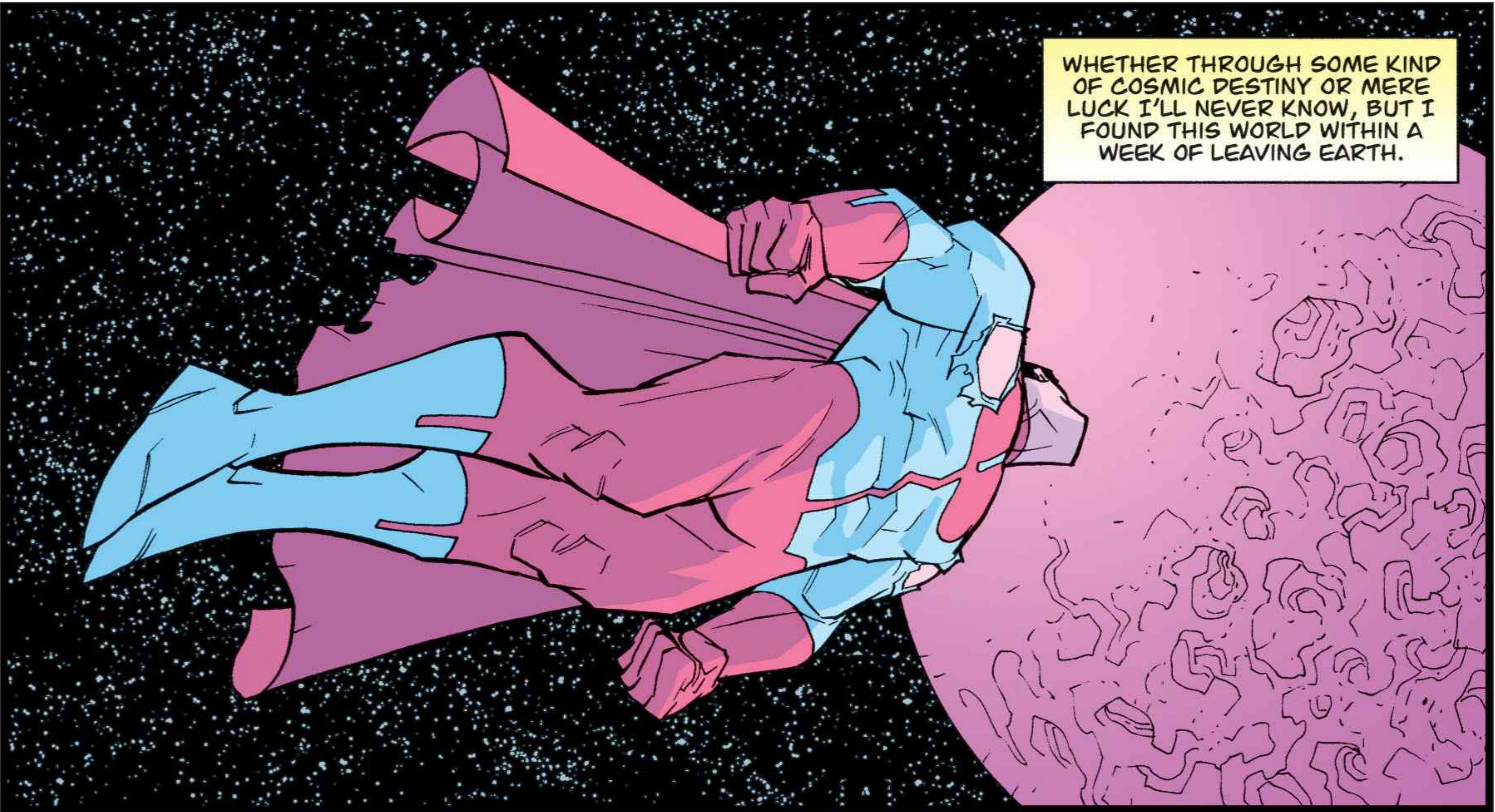
I WAS A **FUGITIVE** FROM MY OWN PEOPLE. IT WOULD ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY LEARNED OF MY **TREACHERY**.



I CHOSE TO **HIDE** RATHER THAN TURN MYSELF IN. IF I COULD CONQUER A SIMILAR WORLD MAYBE THEY WOULD **LESSEN** MY PUNISHMENT.



SO I SET OUT TO FIND SUCH A WORLD.



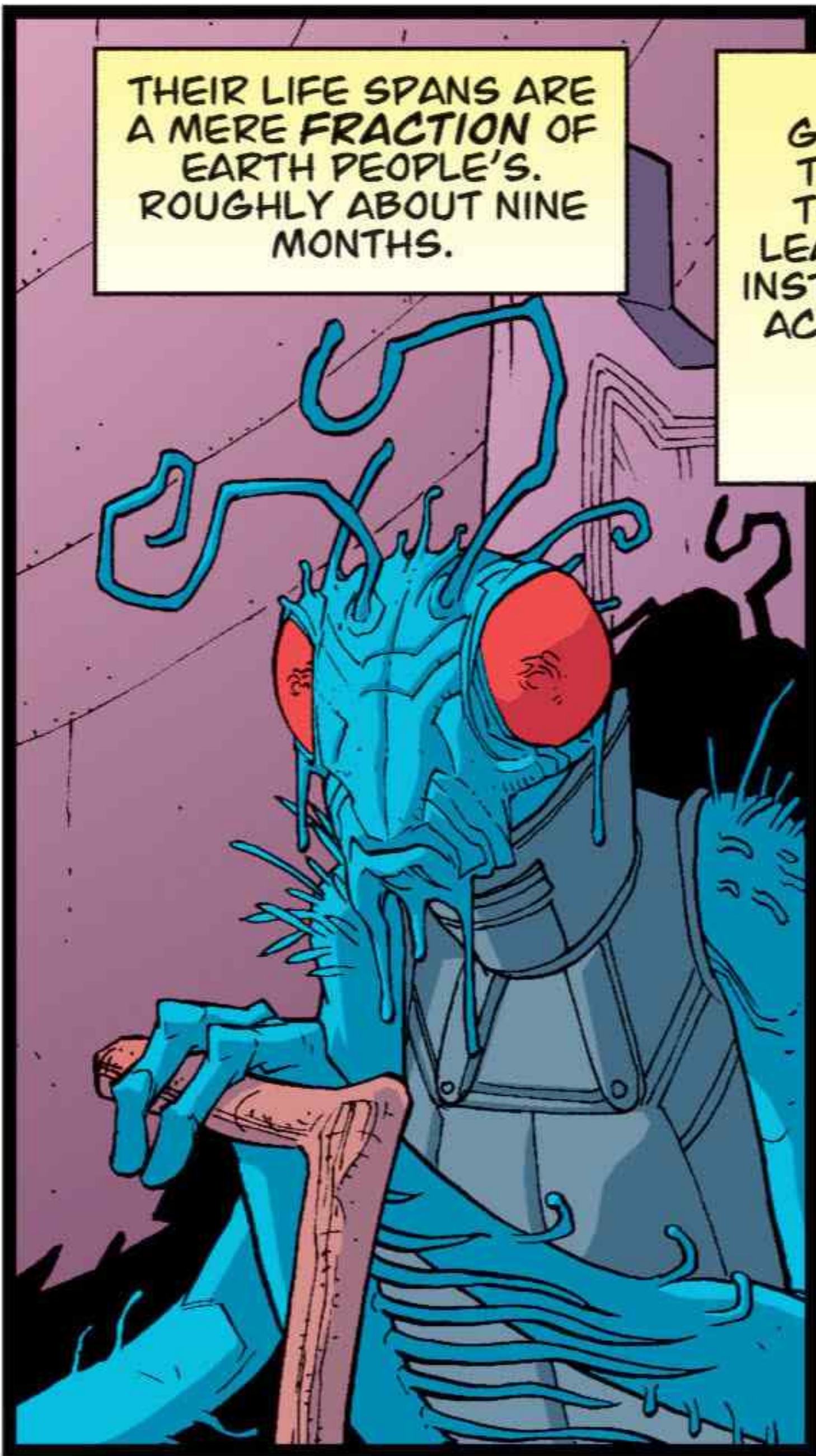
WHETHER THROUGH SOME KIND OF COSMIC DESTINY OR MERE LUCK I'LL NEVER KNOW, BUT I FOUND THIS WORLD WITHIN A WEEK OF LEAVING EARTH.



THEY ARE A PEOPLE VASTLY DIFFERENT THAN THOSE OF EARTH. THOUGH THEIR TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCEMENT AS A SPECIES ARE VERY SIMILAR.

IN SOME WAYS THEY ARE LESS ADVANCED, IN OTHER WAYS, THEY ARE MORE ADVANCED.

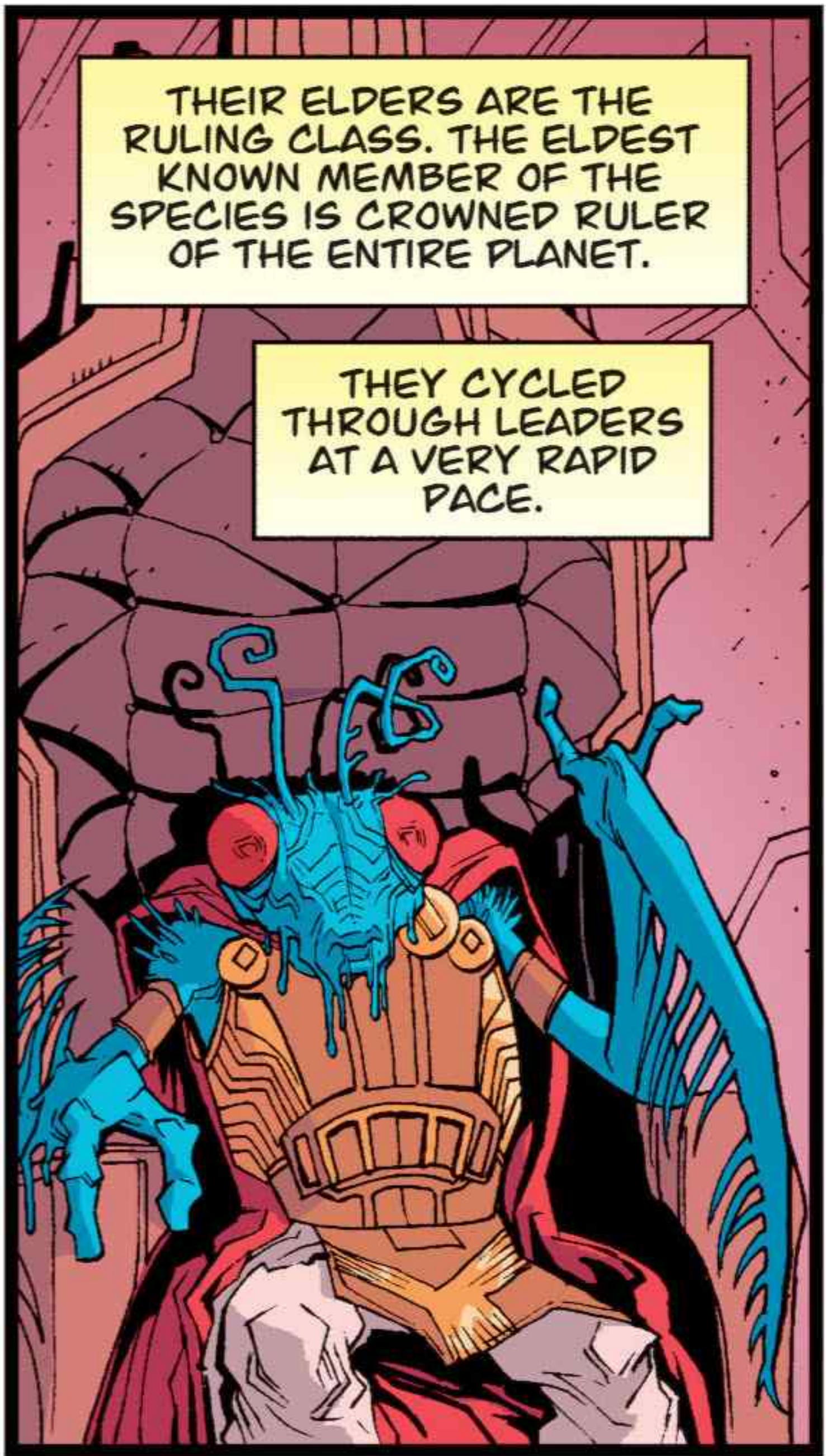
I DECIDED ON THIS WORLD ALMOST INSTANTLY.



THEIR LIFE SPANS ARE A MERE FRACTION OF EARTH PEOPLE'S. ROUGHLY ABOUT NINE MONTHS.



BECAUSE OF THIS GENETIC HANDICAP-- THEY HAVE EVOLVED TO THE POINT WHERE LEARNING IS AN ALMOST INSTANTANEOUS PROCESS ACHIEVED DURING THE ACTION THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO LEARN.



THEIR ELDERS ARE THE RULING CLASS. THE ELDEST KNOWN MEMBER OF THE SPECIES IS CROWNED RULER OF THE ENTIRE PLANET.

THEY CYCLED THROUGH LEADERS AT A VERY RAPID PACE.



NEEDLESS TO SAY IT WAS INCREDIBLY EASY TO ASSUME CONTROL OF THIS PLANET. ONCE THEY LEARNED HOW OLD I WAS--I WAS ELECTED RULER ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

THINGS MOVE VERY FAST HERE.



THEY JUST HANDED THE WHOLE PLANET OVER TO YOU? NO QUESTIONS ASKED?



YES, SON-- THEY DID.

THINGS ARE VERY DIFFERENT HERE, MARK. THEIR LIFE SPAN ACCOUNTS FOR A GREAT MANY DIFFERENCES.

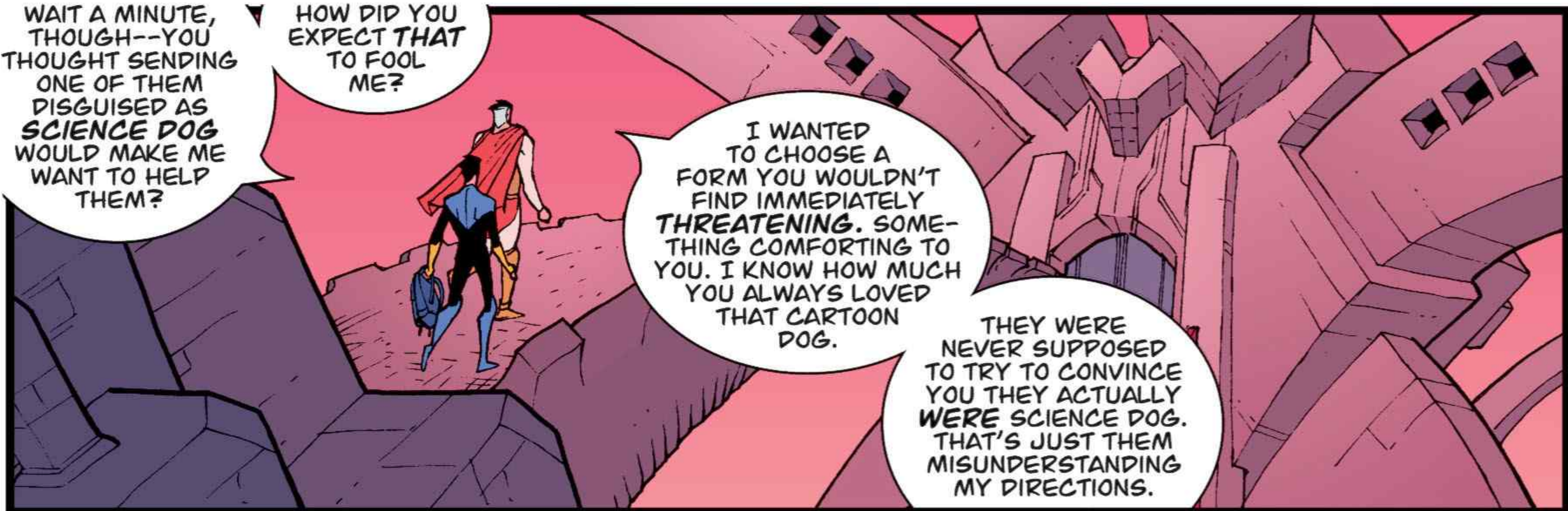
AFTER NINE MONTHS HERE, NO ONE WILL BE ALIVE TO REMEMBER HOW THEIR PLANET WAS BEFORE MY RULE. THINK ABOUT THAT.

YOU OUT LIVE AN ENTIRE GENERATION IN HALF A YEAR.



I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. I CAN SEE HOW THAT WOULD MAKE A TAKEOVER EASIER TO ACCEPT.

COME. THERE IS STILL MUCH TO DISCUSS.

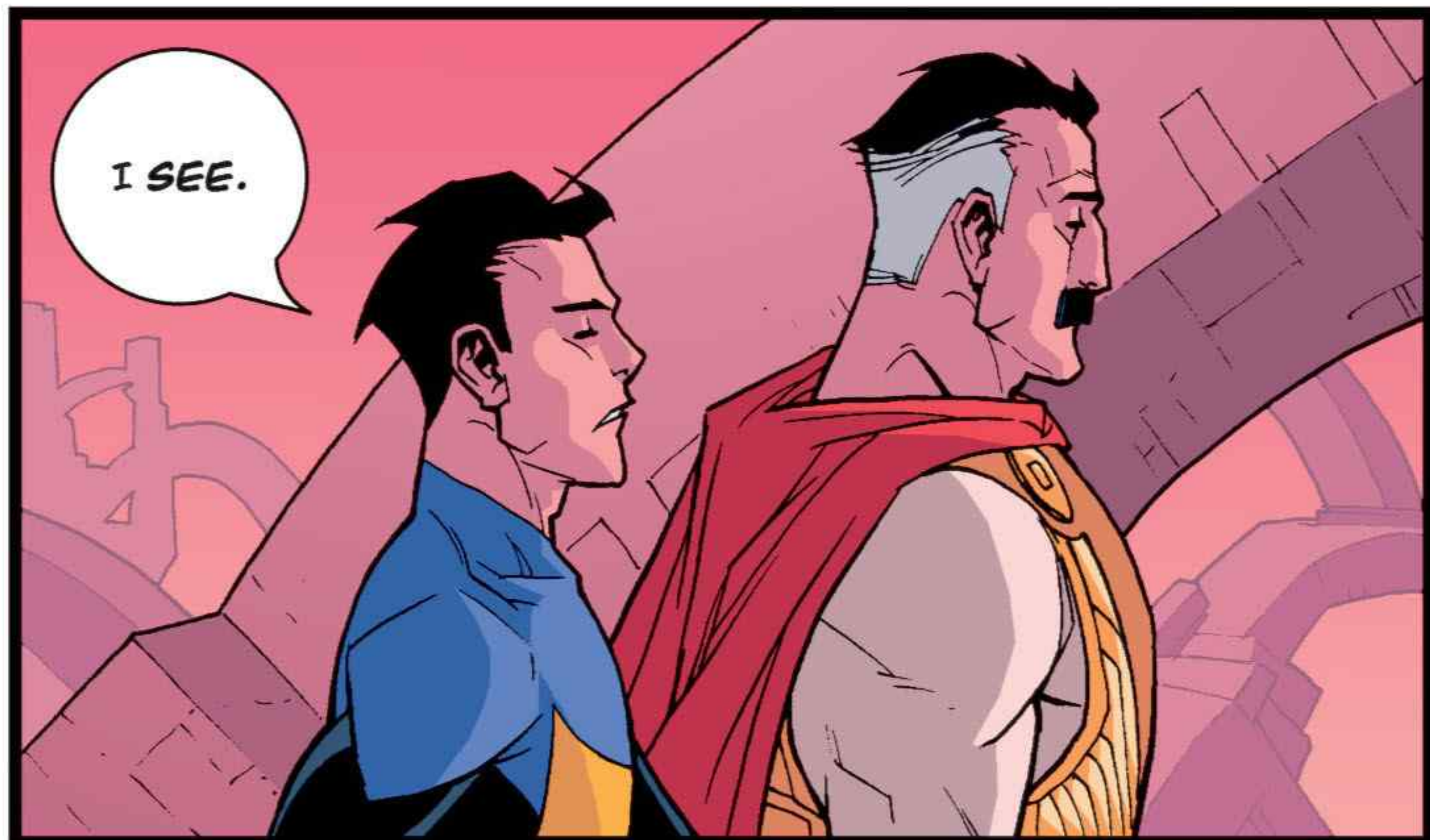


WAIT A MINUTE, THOUGH--YOU THOUGHT SENDING ONE OF THEM DISGUISED AS **SCIENCE DOG** WOULD MAKE ME WANT TO HELP THEM?

HOW DID YOU EXPECT THAT TO FOOL ME?

I WANTED TO CHOOSE A FORM YOU WOULDN'T FIND IMMEDIATELY **THREATENING**. SOMETHING COMFORTING TO YOU. I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU ALWAYS LOVED THAT CARTOON DOG.

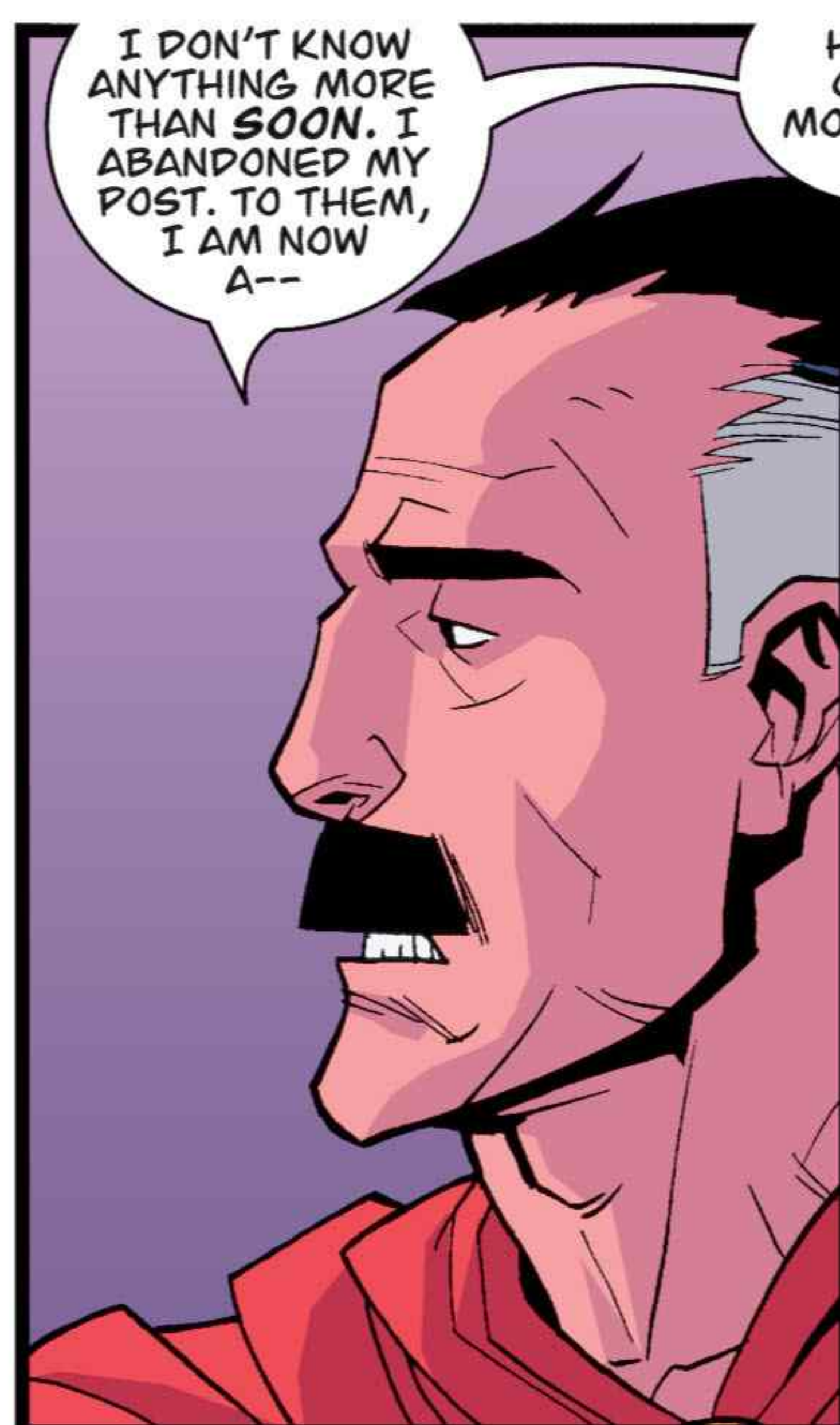
THEY WERE NEVER SUPPOSED TO TRY TO CONVINCE YOU THEY ACTUALLY WERE SCIENCE DOG. THAT'S JUST THEM MISUNDERSTANDING MY DIRECTIONS.

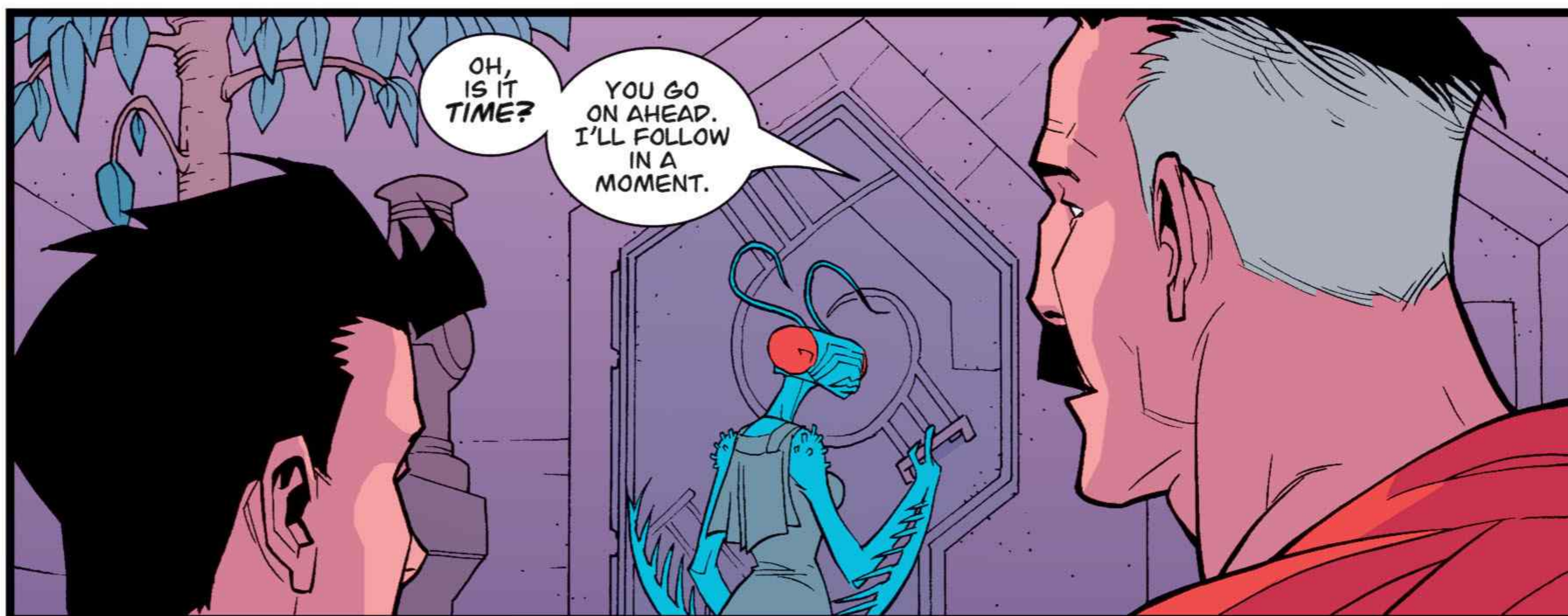


I SEE.

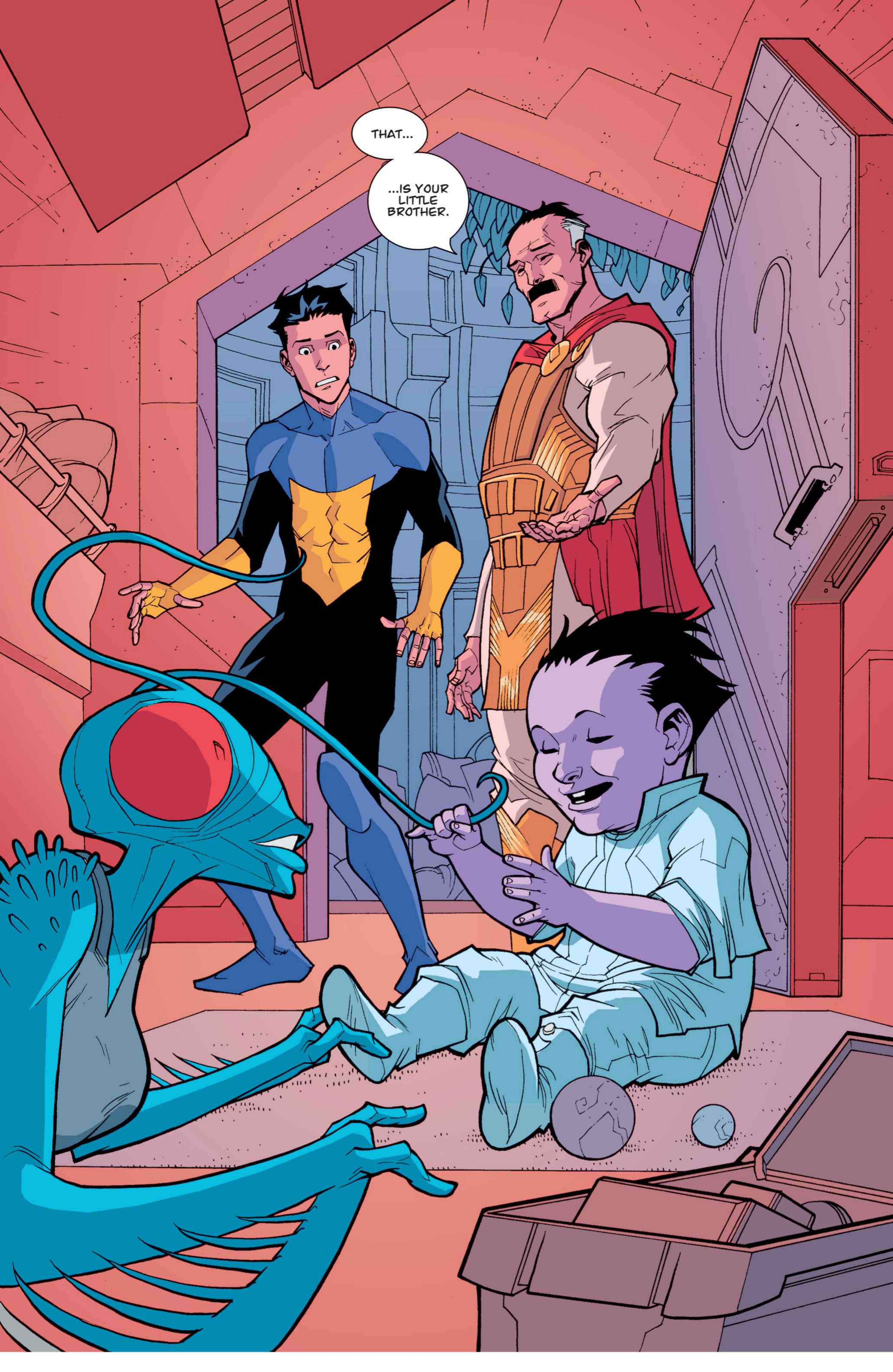












THAT...

...IS YOUR
LITTLE
BROTHER.